

Road to Emmaus Dr Greg Heisler “Spirit Led Preaching”

The greatest sermon in the Bible was never written down and never made it into print.

We know where it was preached....on the road to Emmaus.

We know when it was preached ...just days after the resurrection.

We even know who preached it...JESUS!

Call it a teaser if you will, but the biblical text gives us no more than this: “ **And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.**” (Luke 24:27)

You expect the next verse to read, “ **First, he went to Genesis and explained to themthen to Exodus, and he pointed out how he was...**”

Instead we are left to speculate and wonder.

Yet one thing we can be sure of: Jesus himself preached himself from all the Scriptures.

I think Luke 24:27 is a great description of the expository preacher’s task: to explain to our audience what is said in all the Scriptures about Jesus.

This does not simply limit us to the Gospels, which lend themselves readily to testify about Christ and his life and ministry.

Remember, the Scriptures Christ was referring to in Luke 24:27 didn't include the New Testament because it had not yet been written.

We preachers must practice in our pulpits what we believe in our theology : **Christ is the grand theme, the singular message, and the supreme subject of ALL the Bible.**

Whereas the Old Testament predicts Christ, the New Testament presents Christ.

Both Testaments bear Christological witness.

If Jesus used the Old Testament to preach about himself, then so should we!

Jesus, in a post resurrection appearance, revealed himself to the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

The preaching of Jesus resulted in the disciples' introspection:
Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us" Luke 24:32

Every preacher longs for his listener's hearts to be set on fire by what he is saying, yet the preacher cannot forget the preceding verse: **"Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him"**

The opening of the eyes came before the burning of the heart.

What kind of preaching opens the eyes of listeners?

The kind that always "recognizes " Jesus!

The Spirit opens the eyes, but the man of God must take the Word of God and present a clear picture of Jesus.

Luke 24: 13-35

Sunday 6th April 2008

The Christian faith has been likened to a JOURNEY

- (i) Bishop Keith's recent Diocesan Pilgrimage
- (ii) Funeral homilies

“Putting your hand into the hand of God”

“ I said to the man
Who stood at the gate of the year
Give me a light that I may tread safely
Into the unknown

And he replied: Go out into the darkness
And put your hand into the hand of God.

That shall be better than light
And safer than a known way.

So I went forth and finding the Hand of God
Trod gladly into the night.

(Minnie Louise Haskins (1875-1957)

In our Gospel reading today, the two disciples were on a journey

One was Cleopas, who was the other?

Perhaps it was Luke the author of the Gospel. I suggest that
because Luke seems to know the details very intimately.

It had been a terrible week for the two men. The road from
Jerusalem to Emmaus , I have described earlier.

As they walked down the road, they struggled to understand what has happened that week.

In the short space of 7 days, their world has been shattered. Jesus...on whom they had placed all their hopes...was dead.

The Messiah had been killed, crucified on a Cross.

The light of their world had been extinguished.

As they walked along the road, they bumped into a man who engaged them in conversation and asked them why they are so sad.

Yet they didn't recognize that it was Jesus with them.

They told him that Jesus who they had hoped would deliver Israel, was dead.

The man replied by explaining to them that all of this was in God's plan.

Couldn't they understand, he said that the Scriptures pointed to a suffering Messiah and not a Superhero.

And still they did not recognize Jesus.

When they reached Emmaus, they invited the man to have supper with them.

It was only when he took the bread, broke it and blessed it, they recognized him.

Jesus the Risen Lord.

2 Have you ever wondered why the disciples couldn't recognize him?

Some possible explanations:

- (i) Jesus was wearing a disguise
- (ii) They had never stood this close to him before.

- (iii) The late afternoon sun was glaring in their eyes.
- (iv) A supernatural force was at work.

Luke tells us the answer...a supernatural force was at work, God was at work.

These two travelers were in the presence of Jesus, but were none the wiser.

Luke tells us that “ They were kept from recognizing him “ (Luke 24;16 NIV)

Another translation of the Bible NASB reads, “ their eyes were prevented from recognizing him”

Yet another translation says, “ their eyes were restrained.”

These two travelers were in the presence of Jesus, but were none the wiser.

Sometimes God is at work and we don't recognize Him at work in our lives

Story John Barrett Macquarie Uni and M.A. Philosophy
I needed to have my eyes opened to see where to go next.

And so it was with the two disciples on the Emmaus road.

They had no idea what to do next.

They could not comprehend that the Messiah firstly, would be killed and secondly that anyone could rise again.

And it is that very fact of the Resurrection that makes the Christian faith so unique.

Story An English House of Lords judge, Lord Diplock once said that “ the Resurrection is the best proved fact of history”

How was Jesus different to other world religious leaders?

Mohammed died, the Buddha died and Confucius died.
Their followers never claimed that any of these leaders rose from the dead.

Jesus died and rose again.
His followers testified to the event.

St Paul in 1 Corinthians 15: 3-8, tells us that at least 500 men saw Jesus after the resurrection, and that does not take into account the women.

Often when we look back on an encounter with God, we recognize that he was there.

Look at what the disciples said as they reflected on their walk to Emmaus:

“ Did not our hearts glow within us while he was talking to us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us (Luke 24:32)

It wasn't Jesus' intellectual explanation that had meant much to them.

It was his very presence that warmed their hearts.

Story John Wesley, founder of the Methodist church was 35 years old when he experienced a similar encounter with God. It was his conversion experience that happened on the evening of 24th May 1738.

Wesley had gone very unwillingly to a non-conformist meeting in London (he was after all an Anglican Vicar?)

At the meeting someone began to read Martin Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans.

Let me read to you what Wesley himself wrote about the transformation that occurred as he listened to Luther's preface;

“ About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation: and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.” (The Journal of John Wesley)

Strangely warmed, did not our hearts glow?

When we meet the risen Lord, we know we have done so, even if we can't quite describe what is going on.

Conclusion

The two disciples were journeying on the road to Emmaus. They were confused and did not know what was going on.

They were looking for a light to guide them. Yet they only found meaning to the events of the previous week....when the Risen Christ was revealed to them. Jesus met them on the road but this only had any meaning to them when He was revealed to them.

Instead of finding a light to guide them, they were able to put their hand into the hand of God Himself, the hand of Jesus, the Risen Christ.

And you will recall that in probably the most famous post Resurrection experience of Jesus, Jesus asked Thomas quite literally to put his hand into Jesus' hand.

Let it be our prayer this morning that God our heavenly Father will reveal Jesus to us, so we can put our hands into the hand of God.